

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Silversmith Building

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 10 South Wabash  not for publication

city or town Chicago  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60601

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

I determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

I determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register

other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/ business

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/business

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Terra Cotta

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1897

**Significant Dates**

1897

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/BUILDER**

Weber, Peter J.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

The Art Institute of Chicago



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7. Description

In 1897, the Silversmith Building was constructed at 10 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. This elegantly detailed commercial building is from the office of D.H. Burnham and Company, architects, with Joachim Giaver as engineer. The front of the building faces east on Wabash Avenue, a major north-south commercial thoroughfare in Chicago's Loop. Located along this stretch of Wabash are commercial buildings most of which range from eight to twelve stories. Many were built with first floor storefronts and retail spaces on the lower levels and rental spaces above. Immediately to the south and north of this structure are commercial buildings with remodeled storefronts. The Haskell building to the south abuts the wall of 10 South Wabash, as does the wall of the Heyworth building to the north. To the west of the building is an alley. Since its construction was completed in 1897, the Silversmith Building has undergone minimal exterior alterations. The storefronts, along with many on the street, have been remodeled. The building was built as a commercial and office space and serves a similar purpose today.

The Silversmith Building is a ten story masonry faced structure built on pile foundations and a stone basement level. The building is 81 feet wide along Wabash Avenue and 150 feet deep, filling the lot except for the back 20 feet off the alley. Above the second floor, a light court of 30 feet by 40 feet forms a reverse C shape. The building is steel framed with hollow tile surrounding the columns beneath the plaster. The floors are formed of an arched tile system covered with concrete slabs. The east facade, eight bays wide, is faced with molded red face brick on the upper floors, dark green glazed terra cotta on the second floor, and modern store fronts on the first floor. The west, south and north facades are faced with Chicago common brick.

The front facade above the second story is primarily Romanesque in design, with smooth, curved dark red monochromatic brick and terra cotta. Squat and spiraled columns add an exotic touch. In contrast, the second story cladding (and originally, the first story piers also) of dark green glazed terra cotta with little embellishment is reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the time. The facade design treatment is traditionally tripartite in its vertical divisions, with a two story base, a six story shaft, and a more elaborate top story surmounted by an intact cornice. The strongly expressed vertical elements and the deep inset of the windows clearly articulate the building's

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structure. The lively facade of eight windows across is expressed as five bays - three wide central bays of two windows each, with a narrow bay of one window on either end. The facade is comprised of varying heights and styles of attached columns which visually divide it.

The first two stories are defined by the original highly glazed green terra cotta facing embellished with a delicate geometric zig zag pattern which surrounds the second floor window openings and originally surrounded the first floor openings as well. There are five storefront bays to the building, with entrances in four of them. The main entrance, with access to the upper floors, is in the northernmost opening which leads to the lobby. It has been modernized with new plate glass paneled inner and outer doors and a transom in metal frames, but which are set within the original opening with its decorative metal surround. The original elevations to the building illustrate an elongated semi-circular round arched sash window with arched muntins in the transom of the entrance, with decorative paneled corners over a three paneled entry door which might have been a central door with sidelights. Decorative light globes have been added to the lower facade, ca. 1979-80.

The face of the building surrounding the two northern storefront bays is covered in modern small, rough cut pieces of peach colored marble, ca. 1965. All four storefronts have been altered, and are constructed of aluminum. At the three southernmost storefronts, the building face is covered in corrugated aluminum as well. The central bay has no door, the bay to the south of it has a revolving door, and the southernmost narrow bay has a small door. It is evident that each of the existing storefronts is in the location of the original storefronts because the glazed terra cotta design remains along the top of the openings and begins to round the corner where it surrounded the sides as well.

At the second story level of the facade, all of the dark green glazed terra cotta is intact. The window openings continue the five bay pattern of three wide central bays flanked by a narrower bay on each end. The windows at this level are quite large, extending from nearly floor to ceiling. The existing windows consist of metal framed fixed plate glass divided horizontally with metal mullions. The three central windows have five divisions, with the three central panes divided from the outside panes by heavier mullions. The two end windows have one lighter mullion dividing two panes. Earlier photos of the building indicate that the original second story openings contained Chicago

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style windows - much as existing except that areas now divided by the lighter mullions were large single panes of glass. All of these openings are surrounded by the zig zag pattern in terra cotta. An square foliated panel in the same glazed terra cotta, a variation on the classical patera, ornaments the juncture of window openings between the second and third story levels. Defining each of the five bays are decorative terra cotta pendants below each of the columns that extend out to the face of the building.

The third story, while faced with the same red brick and terra cotta as the upper floors, presents a more elaborate facade. A pair of joined, round attached brick columns with unglazed terra cotta capitals at the level of the window lintels divides each set of windows in the three central bays, and sets them apart from the single continuous attached column of the upper stories. A molded terra cotta cornice separates the third story level from those above. The fourth through ninth stories are treated as a total design, with some definition of the five-bay theme. Between and on either end of the three wider central bays the wider mullion has a continuous rounded brick column applied to a rounded corner flat piece that forms a pilaster capped by an acanthus leaf capital at the top of the ninth floor window level. The columns continue up to the tenth floor sill level where they meet yet another terra cotta decorative molding that separates the two top floors. Between the windows of each of the three central bays and on either end of the building facade is another rounded column that extends up to the ninth floor, but these columns are applied directly to the brick face. Like the pilasters at the wider divisions, they are capped by acanthus leaf capitals at the ninth floor lintel level.

The top story treatment is again more elaborate than the fourth through ninth stories. The tenth floor facade is embellished with attached spiral columns which again divide the facade into three wider central bays with a narrower one on each end, so that there are a total of six. The half-hexagonal capitals for the spiral columns extend up into the building cornice, becoming part of the corbeled work. Each of the top story windows is framed by a set of smooth columns with capitals that appear to support the jack arched lintel. The building is surmounted by a corbeled brick and terra cotta cornice. Attenuating upward is a string course, a row of dentils, and another string course supporting the modillions, and culminating with three levels of decorative terra cotta moldings.

Because of the strong vertical decorative elements which extend several layers from the face of the building, the windows and spandrels appear to be set very deep.

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Consequently, there is a lively contrast between the dramatic vertical elements and the smooth inset spandrels, which are further emphasized by sills of decorative terra cotta. In addition, the lintel of each window is faced with terra cotta in imitation of a stone jack arch. Each window opening on floors three through six and floors nine and ten contain the original wood double hung, one-over-one light windows. The windows on floors eight and nine have been replaced with metal framed windows in the original openings.

The south, north and west facades of the building, in addition to the light court elevations, are faced with Chicago common brick with no embellishments. The windows are all single openings in a somewhat irregular pattern. They are either trabeated openings with limestone lintels, or segmental arched brick lintels. The windows are much like those on the upper floors of the facade, with wood double hung, one-over-one light windows at all levels except for the eighth and ninth floors which have been replaced with metal. Windows throughout the building are in fair condition, with some more deteriorated than others.

There is no typical floor plan for this building. While the upper floors contain differing floor plans for various businesses and the street level is, as it always was, available for shops to be entered from the street, the second floor level is more of a mystery, with taller ceilings than the upper floors and an open floor plan. The lobby to the upper floors is entered from the northernmost entrance to the building and lies along the northern wall of the building. From inspection of the extant marble floor tiles, the general shape of the lobby is much like the original. Long and narrow, it opens onto the elevator bank with three passenger elevators on the north wall, and continues west to the stairs, which is now closed off with a dividing wall from the lobby. The stairs, enclosed on three sides, has marble treads and features cast iron risers, banister and newel posts with floral patterns. The remainder of the lobby - wall and ceiling finishes - have been altered with modern wall and ceiling panels and lighting.

The first floor retail spaces have been altered over the years, with suspended ceilings and lighting and new wall coverings. The shapes of these spaces have most likely changed as well. Just inside the central storefront is an escalator to the basement level, which was renovated into a food court several years ago. To the rear of the first floor is a freight elevator in the northwest corner and a stairs to the basement level in the southwest corner. The second floor space, with fourteen foot ceilings, is completely

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open with the exception of an enclosed mezzanine over the northeast area, small utility rooms along the remainder of the north wall, and fitting rooms along the south wall. This floor was most recently used as a retail clothing store, and is now vacant.

The upper levels of the building are currently vacant except for offices on the seventh floor and a store on the tenth floor. Generally, all floors have some type of corridor or area off the elevators. The third, fourth, seventh, eighth floors contain many small offices, in differing floor plans and all altered from the original. The fifth, sixth, ninth and tenth floors have fewer but larger work spaces. Most recently, the building contained storage, print shops and a large variety of businesses. With the exception of some ca. 1940's display cases on the tenth floor, there is no evidence in the building of finished trim or details.

Though the first floor storefronts have been altered, along with some of the lobby and the interior, the building is in good condition and retains its integrity of setting, materials, design and workmanship. The exterior masonry and fenestration is remarkably intact, and the building displays its original ornate cornice and facade of monochromatic brick and terra cotta set off by the unusual glazed terra cotta base.

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8. Statement of Significance

## Summary

Built in 1897, the Silversmith Building at 10 South Wabash Street, Chicago, Illinois, meets Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a late nineteenth century Chicago commercial building as designed by Peter J. Weber of the eminent Chicago architectural firm of D.H. Burnham and Company. Designed during the firm's early period following the World's Columbian Exposition, it features many of the typical classical details of the time, but remains one of the last commissions of the firm to incorporate Romanesque Revival design. The building's lively use of color and texture presents a contrast between the structural expression of the upper floors rendered in warm red brick and unglazed terra cotta, and the dark green glossy terra cotta cladding of the lower floors which anticipate the later uses of colored terra cotta on building exteriors. D.H. Burnham and Company, one of Chicago's most prolific architectural firms designing commercial buildings, produced this building for the jewelry and silver trade at a time of transition in the company's designs from the robust Romanesque buildings of the early and mid-1890's to the restrained neoclassical works that became their later hallmark.

The late nineteenth century saw a burgeoning of the jewelry trade in Chicago, with offices, workshops and retailers clustering in the Loop along Wabash Avenue. The earlier post-fire commercial "mercantile loft" buildings such as the Haskell Building of ca. 1875 abutting 10 South Wabash on the south, gave way to specialized buildings such as Adler and Sullivan's Jeweler's Building of 1882 just across the street. In 1896, in anticipation of the completion of the Loop elevated rail line on Wabash Avenue, the Schlesinger and Mayer department store acquired the Haskell Building and commissioned Louis Sullivan to redesign it, adding six more stories to it and completely rebuilding the facade with Chicago style windows. Only the first two floors were completed, but the effort reveals the kind of activity on Wabash Avenue in 1896 when wholesale jewelers Benjamin Allen and Company and the Gorham Manufacturing Company commissioned the Silversmith Building.

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The jewelry trade in Chicago around the turn of the century was strong for a number of reasons. As a center of innovative design, many prominent Chicagoans were advocating the American Arts and Crafts movement, often attending lectures on the subject at the Art Institute of Chicago and reading Chicago's own publication House Beautiful. A prominent leader of this development was Jane Addams and Hull House. The concept behind Hull House applied the knowledge of various immigrant groups perpetuating their skills in craft activities. In an appeal towards hand craftsmanship, Jane Addams viewed the Hull house as a regenerative force facing a rapidly multiplying mechanized society. Renewed interest in hand-crafted items caught the attention of Chicago jewelers and merchants.

In this environment, the Silversmith Building was built in 1896-97 in response to the expanding trade, in an effort to appeal to jewelers and silversmiths in the area. Early advertisements for the building refer to its fireproof construction, high degree of light and ventilation, heavy loadbearing capabilities, and fast elevators as well as its "spacious marble lobby". It was built for a cost of \$250,000 with the intention of leasing the first and perhaps the second floor to retailers and the upper floors to wholesalers of silver and jewelry. The original tenants of the building, in addition to Benjamin Allen and Company and the Gorham Manufacturing Company, included Rogers and Company, Wallace Brothers, Wallace and Sons, Van Bergh Silverplate Company, Rogers and Hamilton, Simpson Hall, Miller and Company, various clock and watchmakers, and makers of watch cases. The ground level tenants were a rug seller and a cigar store.

The Silversmith Building was built in the nineteenth century Commercial Style - the name originated in Chicago to identify those buildings built for the express purpose of responding to the growing dictates of commerce and business. It was a style that developed in Chicago along with the Chicago School of Architecture, created by the evolution of new structural technology. General characteristics of the Commercial Style include a height over five stories, flat roofs, few facade projections, and a fenestration pattern that itself lends character to the building by the regular rhythm and size of the windows.

Fueled by the Chicago fire of 1871, the architectural renaissance was the merging of opportunity, technology, and culture in a city that was rapidly growing and attracting many talented young architects. Daniel Hudson Burnham, however, was one young talented architect who was already in Chicago by 1871. In 1873 he teamed up with his

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first partner, John Wellborn Root, who came to Chicago in 1872, and together they forged a firm on the forefront of modern architecture. While Daniel Burnham was not himself an innovative architect in terms of style and ornament, he was propelled by his vision and business sense, and knew how to bring out the best in others. John Root had significant influence in the development of architecture in Chicago. Condit has stated that "It was in the civic and intellectual context...that John Wellborn Root led the way in bringing the building art of the nineteenth century to its maturity." Along with the other eminent architects of the Chicago School such as Dankmar Adler, Louis Sullivan, William Holabird, Martin Roche, and William LeBaron Jenney, Chicago became recognized as a leader in modern American architecture by the 1890's. Moving from the more detailed historical styles of mid-century, Romanesque Revival as interpreted by Sullivan and by Henry Hobson Richardson lent itself to bold structural expression.

Burnham and Root's partnership produced some of the great buildings of the late nineteenth century, including the Calumet Building on LaSalle Street from 1883 (demolished) and the Insurance Exchange Building from 1885 at 208 South LaSalle (demolished) which anticipated Root's masterpiece, the Rookery of 1888. The Monadnock from 1889-91 was another bold expression and a culmination of the load-bearing commercial style. Other examples of Root's work in the early nineties which illustrate the firm's direction were the Masonic Temple from 1892 and the Woman's Temple from the same time. The firm may have continued in this vein but for Root's death in 1891, just as planning began for the World's Columbian Exposition.

Burnham's life took a dramatic turn in 1891, with both Root's death and being named Director of the Works for the Exposition. During the Fair years, Burnham worked as D. H. Burnham, but in 1894 formed D.H. Burnham and Company with Charles Atwood, Ernest Graham and E.C.Shankland as partners. By the nineties, Burnham's firm was by far the largest in Chicago, with offices in New York and San Francisco. Burnham's vision went beyond that of a single building to embrace the monumentality of the City Beautiful Movement with its stress on classicism and the Beaux Arts. This became the theme for both the Exposition and for most of Burnham's work after that time. The best work of the firm integrated the neoclassicism which was received so favorably at the Exposition with skyscraper technology to create such buildings as the Reliance (1890-91, 1894-95) the Marshall Field and Company Store (1902, 1906-07) and the Railway Exchange Building, completed in 1904.

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The most advanced of the Chicago School designs by the firm is that of the Reliance Building. Charles Atwood, designer of the building from 1894-95, began where John Root left off, both figuratively and literally in the case of the Reliance Building. Atwood designed the most original buildings for the firm after 1891, including in addition to the Reliance Building the Marshall Field and Company Store Annex completed in 1893, and the Fisher Building from 1895-96. The Reliance Building presented the most advanced expression of steel skeleton construction to date, with over two thirds of its surface in glass. The feeling of lightness and airiness is additionally created by the highly glazed white terra cotta skin - an innovative use of terra cotta at that time. The subdued Gothic ornament on the building is incidental to its form. On the Fisher Building the Gothic ornament is more pronounced but the structure is very similar with its steel frame clad in light terra cotta. Other buildings by the firm in the early nineties, now demolished, included the Majestic Hotel (1893), the Great Northern Hotel of 1891, and the Great Northern Office and Theater Addition (1895) designed to compliment it.

Peter J. Weber began working for D.H. Burnham and Company soon after the firm organized and after having worked directly for the World's Columbian Exposition as assistant to Charles Atwood who was designer in chief. Weber was born in Cologne, Germany in 1863, the son of Anton Weber, inventor and maker of the first sewing machine used in Germany. He entered the Atelier de Voss und Mueller, in Cologne, in 1882, where he designed homes. From 1886 until 1891, he worked in the office of Kayser und von Grossheim, Berlin architects. After arriving in Chicago in 1891, Weber worked for a short period with Adler and Sullivan before joining the Exposition.

Among the earliest drawings of Weber's in the Art Institute of Chicago collection are ten sheets of presentation drawings for the Rathskeller Neubau in Halle-an-der-Salle in Saxony, Germany, dating from ca. 1887. There is also a drawing dated 1888 for an Exhibition Hall for the Chicago Lakefront, and one dated 1890 titled Industry Palace at the Lakefront, Chicago. These drawings anticipate his interest in Chicago, and indicate his talent for intricately designed and rendered classical buildings, beautifully proportioned and monumentally graceful. His design drawings for the Columbian Exposition include only one building that is known to have been built - the Chocolate-Menier Pavilion. Other drawings include an elegant Beaux Arts proposed entrance to the grounds, an elevated electric tower, and the Cluett Coon and Company Exhibition Pavilion. Another set that may have had to do with the fair is a set of five drawings for a Stadium/Coliseum/Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building, Chicago, 1893.

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Probably Weber's first larger design project for D.H. Burnham and Company was the Illinois Trust and Savings Building, completed in 1896 at the corner of LaSalle & Jackson Streets. It has been described by Randall as "one of the most elegant buildings of the period." Blatantly classical as befits a bank, the structure and proportion is that of a temple, with a long portico of nine massive corinthian columns supporting an entablature the height of a full story. Only a few stories in height, again it displays Weber's inclination for symmetrical monumentality incorporating delicate detail. Prior to his design for this building, his name appears on a few sheets of design drawings for the First National Bank in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1894, but he may have been more the delineator than the architect.

Before the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank was completed, Weber was working on the design for the Silversmith Building, which are dated June 1896. While other designers in the firm produced very restrained and formal neoclassical designs such as the Stewart Building at State and Washington Streets (completed in 1897, demolished), Weber chose to design a lively facade in warm red brick, more reminiscent of the Rookery than of any other building to come from that office in the mid to late 1890's. The warm red monochromatic brick and unglazed terra cotta, the rounded-corner flat pilasters, and the round brick attached columns all evoke the Romanesque Revival with its Moorish undertones. Surprisingly in contrast to the upper stories, Weber selected a dark green highly glazed terra cotta to clad the lower two floors of the building. This was unusual for several reasons. Typically, the lower floors of the firm's commercial buildings were accentuated and delineated from the upper floors in some fashion, but the most frequent method was to rusticate the finish on the piers, particularly the corners, which appeared to ground the building with a feeling of solidity. Often classical columns were used to articulate the storefronts and second story windows. Furthermore, if terra cotta was used as cladding during this time, it was made to represent limestone in imitation of the look of the White City.

Used since 1870 in Chicago for both fireproofing and ornamentation, unglazed terra cotta much like that used structurally was formed into intricate molds to create applied designs of all styles, often used in conjunction with brick facades. Following the Chicago fire of 1871, there was widespread use of terra cotta tiles as fireproofing in commercial structures. By the mid-to-late 1880's, light colored terra cotta was manufactured and used to imitate limestone decoration to contrast with brick facades. In 1894, however, Charles Atwood pushed terra cotta technology. Instead of confining its use to

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ornamentation, he called for the entire glazed terra cotta facades on the Reliance Building, which, though still intended to imitate limestone, led to terra cotta's recognition as a material adapted to clad steel frame buildings. The adaptability of terra cotta to steel frame construction, both as fireproofing for steel structural elements and as cladding, revolutionized the terra cotta industry and caused it to expand rapidly.

Though the technology for colored glazed terra cotta cladding was available locally since the 1880's when the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company upgraded its kilns to produce a stronger product, the colored glazes were only created for small art pieces. That Weber's use of dark green shiny glazed (called "enameled") terra cotta cladding was quite innovative in 1896 is evidenced by a National Terra Cotta Society brochure, ca. 1920 which stated "The successful development of the first glazes less than twenty years ago gave great impetus to further advance, for with the principle of terra cotta glazes understood, the matter of developing various colors was comparatively simple." Furthermore, in 1911 J. Monroe Hewlett in The Brickbuilder predicted that architects would begin to explore the use of colorful terra cotta exteriors.

Weber's use of terra cotta cladding on the Silversmith Building, which is specified on the original elevations from 1896, is reminiscent of the glazed earthy colored tiles used as fireplace surrounds in Arts and Crafts buildings from around this time. The terra cotta was manufactured by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company of Chicago, which by 1900 had become the nation's largest terra cotta producer, and one of the industry's leaders in terra cotta innovation. The simple zig zag window surround design is similar to the turn-of-the-century European geometrical designs that were forerunners of the American Arts and Crafts movement. There was strong interest in the Arts and Crafts movement in turn-of-the-century Chicago architecture, as evidenced by activities of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society and the Chicago Architectural Club. Many young architects of Chicago were influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in England, particularly as they thought it had the potential to express an American spirit in design. The Chicago Arts and Crafts Society was established in 1895 with Frank Lloyd Wright, George Maher, Dwight Perkins and Ernest Graham among the charter members. The fundamental principles of the credo were simplicity of forms, the elimination of excessive detail, and respect for materials. The Chicago Architectural Club also promoted these precepts, as the primary organization promoting the Prairie School movement. Ernest Graham's name appears also on the elevation drawings of the Silversmith Building,

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though not as lead architect. It indicates possible input from him, and suggests that Weber, as a young architect in a leading and dynamic firm, may have been influenced by these progressive ideas.

While Daniel Burnham left the design of individual buildings to his associate architects, he reviewed and approved all the designs. One feature of the Silversmith Building typical of Burnham is the light court, a variation of the concept developed in the design of the Rookery which was greatly lauded at the time. The floor plan of the Silversmith Building was designed so that natural light and ventilation could enter all of the work spaces, which would have been particularly important for both crafting or viewing intricate work. The light court is constructed on the south side of the building forming a reverse C, with all the elevators, the stairwell, and the lobby on the north side. In addition, the greatest use of the retail space is made by having the entrance and lobby in the north bay, leaving the most possible amount of flexible retail space.

The Silversmith Building was to be one of the last of the lively Romanesque eclectic buildings to come from Burnham's office. The future trend was for much more rigid historicity. Weber followed his design for the Silversmith Building with that for the Land Title & Trust Company Building in Philadelphia, completed in 1897. It reveals a total departure from the design of the Silversmith Building and is one of the first of the buildings which became typical of D.H. Burnham and Company in the following ten years. That is, a restrained and almost Renaissance Revival interpretation of neoclassicism adapted to the large steel framed commercial structure. With clearly defined base, smooth faced shaft and elaborate upper levels and cornices, these buildings were most often sheathed in light terra cotta and had large plate glass storefronts and almost as large second story windows. Upper level windows were in sets of two or three. Corners were often highlighted with rusticated quoins, along with rusticated courses on one or more stories, and ornamental cornice belts dividing the lower floors and upper floors from the shaft. In the case of the Land Title and Trust Company Building, the story just below the upper cornice featured rounded arched windows surrounded by rusticated voisoirs, and the ground floor is strongly classical with a row of two story columns at the front. Other unidentified drawings signed by Weber as architect reveal a similar formula - often the columns are on the second or upper floors, but the designs are restrained classical in form and detail. Weber left D.H. Burnham and Company in 1900 to establish his own firm, partnering with a number of different architects. Most of his extant drawings from after 1900 are

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undated, but generally return to his taste for delicate Beaux Arts. In 1904, however, he displayed creativity and interest in eclecticism in his Arts and Crafts inspired design for the theater at Ravinia in Highland Park, Illinois. The theater reveals a richness of materials and colors in the Art Nouveau interior and Mediterranean exterior with its dark paneled oak entrance and stained glass windows. The building is capped by a terra cotta tile roof. In 1907 Weber designed the addition to the Fisher Building, matching the existing materials, scale, and Gothic detailing.

The design of the Stewart Building at 108 North State Street (demolished), by D.H. Burnham and Company in 1897 bears strong resemblance to the Land Title and Trust Company Building of the same year, and even stronger resemblance to an unidentified drawing labeled "P.J. Weber, Archt." These buildings are typical of the neoclassical formula, which was further evidenced, with variations, in the Merchants Loan and Trust Building (1900) the Railway Exchange Building (1903) the Heyworth Building (1905) which stands just to the north of the Silversmith Building, and the Flatiron Building in New York (1903). Lower height classically columned buildings, on the order of the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank Building, also re-appeared in the Schmidlapp Memorial Library in Cincinnati from 1905 and the Washington D.C. Union Station from 1903-07. Later D.H. Burnham and Company Buildings continued in the same general style with the Edison Building (1907), the Peoples Gas Company Building (1911) Continental National Bank Building (1912-14) and the Conway Building (1913), all in Chicago. The firm of Holabird and Roche, also a very prolific Chicago architecture firm doing commercial structures at this time, designed, from around 1895, buildings similar to those of D.H. Burnham in scale and form, but more in the progressive Chicago School of Architecture style, with Chicago windows, more structural expression and simpler details.

Although the Silversmith Building was not one of the larger commissions of D.H. Burnham and Company, it was poised in both time and design at an architectural transition period. As one of the last of the firm's buildings to exhibit Romanesque Revival features more typical of the late 1880's and early 1890's and to depart from the classical traditions promulgated by the World's Columbian Exposition, it expresses an unusual rendition of the former and much more liveliness than the latter. With the exception of the storefronts, the facade has been left to us in excellent condition as an example of this early phase of the work of D.H. Burnham and Company.

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10. Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point 79.38 feet south of the south boundary of Madison Street and just  
inside the sidewalk on the west side of Wabash Street, proceed south 81.50 feet along  
the line inside the sidewalk, then west 180.86 feet to the point at the inside edge of the  
public alley, then north 81.53 feet along the inside edge of the alley, then 180.87 feet  
east to the original point.

Boundary Justification

The above described lot constitutes the property historically associated with the building.  
The building extends to the property boundaries on the north, east, and south and to  
within twenty feet of the boundary on the west.

